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## Curriculum Ideas for Teachers

# History Intermediate Division

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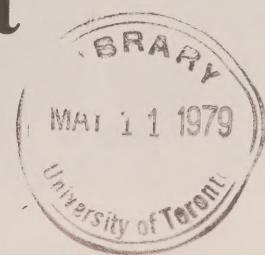
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This resource document was prepared in support of the Intermediate Division History guideline, which states that "a meaningful study of current affairs must be an ongoing part of all history courses developed for the Intermediate Division."

## Current Affairs



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## Rationale

The media constantly bombard us with images of the world: instantaneous reports, filtered by newscasters and reporters, give immediacy to events previously isolated by time and distance. This document is designed to help students develop an awareness of and concern for world affairs and a feeling of involvement in our global village. Awareness of issues from the local to the global level will help develop a sense of citizenship in the students.

## Objectives

The strategies provided will give the student the opportunity to:

- a) develop a critical attitude through the analysis of current issues;
- b) become aware of the inherent continuity of events and follow the development of emerging issues;
- c) appreciate the fundamental interdependence of people and events;
- d) detect bias, propaganda, and sensationalism in reporting;
- e) develop a sympathetic understanding of the problems facing Third World nations;
- f) learn to make value judgements;
- g) develop reading and listening skills;
- h) become aware of possible action.

The various news sources will provide the material for the study; whenever possible the information should relate to the interests of the students. The relevance of news stories and the reliability of their source should be considered when choosing the material. Students should become aware of the impact and significance of foreign, domestic, and community affairs on the individual. Through investigation, interpretation, and discussion of current affairs, students should gain an understanding of the fundamental interdependence of people and events.



## Suggested Strategies

The following selection of strategies can be used when and wherever appropriate in the course of study.

### Student-produced Newspapers

This strategy will give the students the opportunity to:

- become more aware of local issues within their community;
- analyse diverse opinions on current issues;
- develop a sense of belonging to the world community;
- understand the interdependence of people and events;
- identify the viewpoints of individual nations.

Students design their own newspapers to:

- provide a picture of the local community;
- explore a national issue from different points of view (e.g., the energy crisis, the 1976 Quebec election);
- analyse the impact of an international issue (e.g., the Arab-Israeli conflict).

### Crossword Puzzles, Word Search Puzzles

This strategy will give students the opportunity to familiarize themselves further with people, places, and events in the news.

Students create their own crossword puzzles and word search puzzles to illustrate an ongoing current issue (e.g., the Arab-Israeli dispute).

### Collages

This strategy will give students the opportunity to illustrate the universal nature of ongoing issues (e.g., the women's movement, racial tension, energy).

Students create a collage over a period of time, using pictures and words to illustrate an issue of current concern. The students will present the collage to the class, and the class will identify the issue and the point of view and evaluate the accuracy of the presentation.

### Student Cartoons

This strategy will give the student the opportunity to interpret issues with humour.

After analysing cartoons depicting political, social, or economic issues, students illustrate a current affairs article by creating their own cartoons. In their own and in the resource cartoons, students should:

- identify the events, issues, or personalities;
- identify the point of view;
- analyse the point of view.

### News on Your Birthdate

This strategy will give students the opportunity to:

- learn as much as possible about the state of the world in the year they were born;
- see themselves as part of history by putting their individual lives in an historical context.

Using such resources as microfilms, newspapers, library material, family recollections, and family scrapbooks, the students assemble information to show what life was like when they were born and fill out a questionnaire similar to the one below.

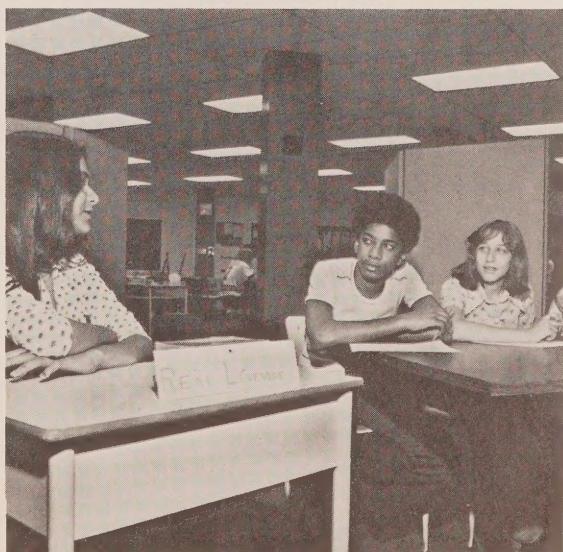
Birthdate:

Year	Month	Day
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Major news stories		
Local news stories		
Human interest stories		
Weather		
Academy Award winners		
Fashions		
Prices, e.g., automobiles, food, clothing		
Wages		
TV programs		
Popular songs and groups		
International, national figures, e.g., Mayor, Premier, Prime Minister		
Top NHL scorer		
Best sellers		

(other categories you wish to add)

To conclude, the student could also choose the most interesting aspect or event of his or her birthdate as the subject of a five-minute report to the class.



### **Know Canada Quiz**

This strategy will give students the opportunity to learn more about Canadian personalities and events. Using flashcards which they have designed and made themselves, students challenge each other to identify Canadian personalities, events, and places.

### **“Front Page Challenge”**

This strategy, based on the television program, will give students the opportunity to:

- further develop their research skills;
- become more aware of current affairs;
- recognize the interrelatedness of issues and people.

Students are chosen to assume the roles of the four panel members, the moderator, and the timekeeper. Three other students each research one story of local, national, or international significance. The panel is given two minutes to identify each news item. If the panel fails in its attempt, the rest of the class may try to guess. A critical analysis of the story should follow in the subsequent interview between the panel and the student who did the research.

### **“Issues and Answers”**

This strategy, based on the television program, will give students the opportunity to:

- further develop their research skills;
- become more aware of current affairs;
- analyse and assess current issues.

One student is chosen to represent a personality in the news (e.g., René Lévesque) and is interviewed by a panel. It will be the responsibility of the panel to develop thought-provoking and challenging questions.

### **Personality Dossier**

This strategy will give the student the opportunity to become aware of the humanness of the newsmakers. Students collect relevant articles and pictures to obtain background information on the ideas, personality, goals, etc., of their chosen subjects. They then use the gathered information to write and present to the class an analysis of the personality.

### **Community Investigation**

This strategy will give students the opportunity to:

- develop their skills of objective interviewing and reporting;
- interpret and analyse an issue.

The student assumes the role of a court reporter, reporter on city affairs, or reporter for school board meetings, and gives an account of an issue of interest. Three students may be assigned as reporters on the same issue — one to represent each side and the third to offer a neutral viewpoint.

### **International Beat Panel**

This strategy will give students the opportunity to:

- recognize the ongoing nature of current affairs by following the development of emerging issues;
- appreciate the interrelation of events: how an incident in one area has an impact upon people elsewhere.

Students are chosen to form a panel of reporters from different international news beats (e.g., China, Israel). With the aid of a moderator, they discuss events of the past year. Rules and procedures (emphasizing the role of the moderator) should be established before the panel begins discussion, to ensure that it proceeds in a disciplined manner.



## Scrapbook

This strategy will give the student the opportunity to:

- distinguish fact from opinion;
- detect bias;
- become aware of the interrelationship of events and people.

The student is assigned an area of the world where important developments are taking place, or a particular crisis, to study. He or she then collects articles in a scrapbook, noting:

- the reliability of the news source;
- the essential elements of the issue;
- bias;
- the difference between opinions and facts.

## Map Analysis

This strategy will give students the opportunity to:

- develop their map-reading skills;
- develop their analytical skills.

Using a map or a series of maps, students locate catastrophes and other events, or analyse such issues as land use, boundary disputes, offshore rights, and territorial expansion.

## Network

This strategy will give students the opportunity to:

- decide what constitutes significant news;
- recognize the control that networks have on the news: how they can choose to emphasize, de-emphasize, and sensationalize their material.

The class drafts a rating sheet based on their own criteria of “good”, “accurate”, and “relevant” news. Students then form groups to represent different TV networks. Although they are all given similar “news” to report, each network chooses its own format. Different groups will probably emphasize different aspects of the news: violence, for example. The groups present their news to the class, which analyses it and gives each network a rating.

## Image Study

This strategy will give students the opportunity to recognize the power that the media have to create or destroy the image of a public personality.

Students are assigned people in the news to study over a specific span of time. They compile articles, pictures, popularity polls, and notations from TV reports to illustrate the ways in which the personality’s public image changes.

## Editorials

This strategy will give students the opportunity to:

- detect bias in editorials;
- recognize the power of the editor;
- develop a critical attitude;
- become aware of their own bias.

Students compare editorials on similar stories from different sources and discuss how the editors’ opinions differ. Students then write letters to a hypothetical editor in response to the editorials. These are then read and discussed in class.

## Current Affairs Articles and Value Clarification

Examining the presentation of current political situations in the media can help students define and clarify their values.

Teachers take an article on a current news item and examine it in two stages, along the lines suggested below:

### *Stage I: The Situation*

- What is the situation?
- What is the problem? (To be discussed first in small groups, then a large group.)
- What is the central value issue?
- What is the value conflict?
- What alternatives does the government have?
- What would be the consequences of implementing these alternatives?
- How could the workers try to achieve their ends?
- How do you think the problem should be solved?

### *Stage II: The Wider Application*

- How could such a situation affect international relations?
- How are the lives of transient workers and immigrant workers affected by political decisions?
- Should the well-being of the workers be a concern of the politicians?
- Is there ever a justification for using others for one’s own ends?

## Evaluation

The study of current affairs should enable students to relate the incidents and issues of the past to present-day events. They should decide whether issues in history repeat themselves, identify the phenomena that do appear to recur (e.g., self-determination, imperialism, struggle for power), and analyse their basic characteristics.

